



CALIFORNIA VETERANS BOARD
Meeting Minutes #785
May 19, 2021



Hugh Crooks, Jr., Chair
Robin Umberg, Vice-Chair
Todd Trotter, Member
Zoe Dunning, Member

Ed Campbell, Member
Vacant, Member
Vacant, Member
Tina Lassiter, Executive Officer

The California Veterans Board (CVB) met utilizing “Bluejeans” videoconferencing on May 19 at 9:30 am.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Hugh Crooks, Vice Chair Robin Umberg, Ed Campbell, Todd Trotter, Megan Elsea and Tina Lassiter

Absent: - Zoe Dunning

30 members of the public were present for portions of the meeting.
Chair Crooks presided.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

WELCOMING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Crooks welcomed and thanked everyone for coming. The Board Members introduced themselves.

MINUTES RECOMMENDATION

Approved minutes from the March meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS –

1. Lauren Duncan, Executive Director, Healing California – informed the Board that “Healing California” is a non-profit that offers dental and vision care to veterans at no cost.
2. Jerry Beckerman and Meagan Lee introduced their program, Passion Spark to reduce veteran Suicide. (Attachment)

PRESENTATION – Legislative Update. Veronica Badillo, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, provided an update on behalf of Frank Zermeno. She commended CalVet on its fight against Covid and addressed the following bills:

- SB 661(Newman) authorizes CalVet to refinance its own loans.
- SB 498 (Umberg) funds legal services to indigent persons: disable veterans.
- AB 1470 (Mathis) ending military suicide task force.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE – Dr. Vito Imbasciani, Secretary, California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet). Secretary Imbasciani thanked all for attending and reported as follows:

Budget – this year’s budget is extraordinary due to an excess in surplus funds. CalVet is grateful for the provisions provided to tend to deferred maintenance at the Homes and continue support for our homeless veterans.

Homes – the Homes continue to open allowing visitors to again visit their loved one. The vaccination rate for residents is over 92% which is the highest of any demographic. Staff had 48% hesitancy to the vaccine but that is now around 25%.

Legislation – the following bills are of interest:

- AB 411 (Irwin and Chiu), Veteran Housing and Homeless Prevention Bond Act of 2022.
- SB 665 (Umberg), Employment policy: voluntary veterans’ preference.
- AB 459 (Mathis), discount on vehicle registration fees.
- AB 305 (Maienschein) would require a line on intake and/or application forms to determine an affiliation with the Armed Forces of the United States.
- AB 1314 (Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs), Veterans Homes; leases.
- AB 1574 (Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy), Public contracts; would tighten restrictions on contractors.
- SB 43 (Umberg), Veterans cemetery; City of Orange.
- SB 348 (Grove), Veterans’ homes; closure.

Questions/Comments:

Member Campbell asked about an update on the master plan: The master plan for all the homes was delivered to the legislature, but CalVet is also required to deliver a master plan for each individual home every 5 years. The year, 2021, is Barstow’s turn creating the possibility for redundancy.

Member Umberg thanked Secretary Imbasciani for the report and asked about any progress in locating soldiers leaving service: CalVet is still working on it and suggests the retrieval of cell numbers and email addresses.

Member Trotter shared that he is cautiously optimistic with the current bills discussed earlier.

CHAIR UPDATE – No report at this time.

COMMITTEE REPORTS/UPDATE ON STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Plan and Objectives

Action Items:

1. **Hugh Crooks:** Communications and Marketing – Chair Crooks expressed his concerns of losing meeting spectators by going back to “in person” meetings and suggested a hybrid option. He also encouraged the other Board members to venture out into the community with proclamations for Memorial Day.
2. **Robin Umberg:**
Legislation: Thank you to Secretary Imbasciani for his legislative update.
Regulations: Our regulations are on hold.
3. **Ed Campbell:** Homes – Ventura is 100% vaccinated. He is looking for a progress report on the construction of the VA clinic. The Home received 196 points out of 197 in its recent Federal Licensing Renewal Exam.
4. **Todd Trotter:** Home Loans – No report at this time.
5. **Zoe Dunning:** Underrepresented and Women Veterans – No report at this time.

Executive Officer update – Executive Officer Lassiter reported that she has been working on outreach and the ability to transfer meetings to live and virtual (hybrid). She asked for suggestions for presenters as well.

OLD BUSINESS –

Board Administrative Book; Review

- #6, Member Travel and Per Diem, no changes
- #7, Election of Board Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, no changes
- #9, Board Quorum, put on hold
- #10, Conduct of Meetings, No changes
- #11, Board Agenda, No changes
- #12, Board Meeting Publicity, No changes
- #13, Rules of Decorum for Public Meetings, No changes

NEW BUSINESS –

Receipt of new appeals and complaints: None

BOARD COMMENTS: Member Trotter expressed his appreciation of the legislation coming through. Member Campbell thanked EO Lassiter for her successful outreach.

Next Meeting: July 21, 2021

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 11:30